

Home

Through thy commandment, thou hast made me wiser than my enemies: for it is ever with me - Ps. cxviii.98.



Seventh Promise of our Blessed Mother To Christians Who Recite The Rosary: Whoever shall have a true devotion for the Rosary shall not die without the Sacraments of the Church.

J.M.J.

Statements by Pope John Paul II on Contraception from 1978-1996, published as an Appendix to **Did Pope Paul VI Approve the Winnipeg Statement? A Search for the Truth**, by Msgr. Vincent Foy, P.H.; Life Ethics Information Centre, 104 Bond St., 3rd floor, Toronto Ontario, Canada, M5B 1X9.

Openness to the gift of children 1 September 1979

Under the heading "Contraception," the Pope said at Limerick, Ireland in Sept. 1979:

"And here, I want to say a very special word to all Irish parents. Marriage must include openness to the gift of children. Generous openness to accept children from God as the gift to their love is the mark of the Christian couple. Respect the God-given cycle of life, for this respect is part of our respect for God himself, who created male and female, who created them in his own image, reflecting his own life-giving love in the patterns of their sexual being."

Ratifying Pope Paul's teaching 2. October 1979

To the bishops of the Episcopal Conference of the U.S. at Chicago on Oct. 8, 1979, the Pope said:

"In exalting the beauty of marriage you rightly spoke against both the ideology of contraception and contraceptive acts, as did the encyclical *Humanae vitae*. And I myself today, with the same conviction of Paul VI, ratify the teaching of this encyclical, which was put forth by my Predecessor by virtue of the mandate entrusted to us by Christ" (AAS, 60, 1968, p.485, *Origins*, Oct. 18, 1979).

Indissoluble; open to fertility 3. November 1979

In speaking to a French group Nov. 3, 1979, the Holy Father emphasized that conjugal love involved a totality of self-giving. He said:

"It aims at a deeply personal unity, the unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and one soul; it demands indissolubility in faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to fertility (cf. HV 9).

God's grace is powerful 4. June 1980

On June 7, 1980, to a group of Indonesian Bishops, His Holiness said:

"In the question of the Church's teaching on the regulation of birth we are called to profess in union with the whole Church the exigent but uplifting teaching recorded in the Encyclical *Humanae vitae*, which my Predecessor Paul VI put forth 'by virtue of the mandate entrusted to us by Christ' (AAS 60, 1968, p.485). Particularly in this regard we must be conscious of the fact that God's wisdom supercedes human calculation and His grace is powerful in people's lives."

"Contraception is to be judged objectively so illicit," said the Pope, "that it can never, for any reason be justified."

Contraception leads to falsification 5. November 1981



In the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, on the role of the family in the modern world, Pope John Paul II taught:

"When couples, by means of recourse to contraception, separate these two meanings that God the Creator has inscribed in the being of man and woman and in the dynamism of their sexual communion, they act as 'arbiters' of the Divine plan and they 'manipulate' and degrade human sexuality - and with it themselves and their married partner - by altering its value of 'total' self-giving. Thus the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality" (n.32).

Pastoral action must not contradict doctrine

6. May 1983

On May 30, 1983, Pope John Paul II addressed the participants in the first Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Family. Among other things he discussed the need for pastoral action to be faithful to *Humanae vitae* and *Familiaris consortio*:

"It is absolutely necessary that the pastoral action of Christian communities be totally faithful to the teachings of the Encyclical *Humanae vitae* and the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*. It would be a grave error to set up pastoral requirements in opposition to doctrinal teaching, since the very first service that the Church must perform for people is to tell them the truth of which she is neither the author nor the master." (*Osservatore Romano*, June 6, 1983).

Church is guide to conscience

7. August 1983

On August 17, 1983, the Holy Father addressed 35,000 people in a general audience in Rome:

"It is not enough to say that we must always follow our conscience," the Pope said, "Each one of us must 'form' a right conscience, one that seeks to know the truth as revealed to us by God, according to his wise and loving plan."

The believer, he said, has the assistance of the Church in forming a "right conscience." For "it is the duty of the Church to give expression to that truth which is Christ himself, and to declare and confirm those principles of the moral order which have their origin in human nature itself." (*Western Catholic Reporter*, Sept. 5, 1983)

Responsible parenthood

8. October 1983

Emphasizing that artificial contraception is intrinsically evil the Pope taught in 1983:

"At the origin of every human person there is a creative act of God. No man comes into existence by chance; he is always the object of God's creative love. From this fundamental truth of faith and reason it follows that the procreative capacity, inscribed in human sexuality is - in its deepest truth - a cooperation with God's creative power. And it also follows that man and woman are not arbiters, are not the masters of this same capacity, called as they are, in it and through it, to be participants in God's creative decision. When, therefore, through contraception, married couples remove from the exercise of their conjugal sexuality its potential procreative capacity, they claim a power which belongs solely to God: the power to decide in a final analysis the coming into existence of a human person. They assume the qualification of not being cooperators in God's creative power, but the ultimate depositaries of the source of human life. In this perspective, contraception is to be judged objectively so profoundly unlawful, as never to be, for any reason, justified. To think or to say the contrary is equal to maintaining that in human life, situations may arise in which it is lawful not to recognize God as God." (*L'Osservatore Romano*, Oct. 10, 1983)

State should stay out of family planning

9. June 1984

"Demographic policies must not consider people as mere numbers or only in economic terms ... they must respect and promote the dignity and the fundamental rights of the human person and of the family." He called it "a grave offence against human dignity and justice" for authorities to engage in any activities "which attempt to limit in any way the freedom of couples in deciding about children." Likewise "gravely unjust," he said, is any attempt to condition international aid for development "on programs of contraception, sterilization, and procured abortion." (*Catholic Register*, Toronto, June 23, 1984)

Dissent not acceptable

10. January 1985

After the Pope completed a five-month series of lectures on human sexuality, marriage, and the regulation of births, on

November 28, 1984, the Osservatore Romano printed a front page editorial by Archbishop (later Cardinal) Edouard Gagnon, pro-president of the Pontifical Commission for the Family. It stated:

"Today ... it is no longer possible to have doubts about the authoritative doctrine of the Church [of *Humanae vitae*] and about the unacceptability of dissent." Some theologians were "happy to find in a certain popular resistance to the encyclical a good opportunity to propagandize their own ideas on the autonomy of the individual conscience." But the Pope's campaign to end doctrinal confusion is "the only way out" of society's crises, and sustain "with a solid doctrine" the efforts of people fighting "in defence of life and the institution of matrimony." (London Free Press, Jan. 19, 1985)

Not debatable

11. June 1987

Two years later the Holy Father himself reiterated the above sentiments. Addressing a Conference on Natural Family Planning, he said:

"What is taught by the Church on contraception does not belong to material freely debatable among theologians."

Those who argue otherwise "in open contrast with the law of God, authentically taught by the Church, guide couples down a wrong path." (Prairie Messenger, June 15, 1987; Osservatore Romano, June 6, 1987)

Live it, don't question it

12. March 1988

On March 14, 1988, Pope John Paul addressed a Congress on the Family. It being close to the 20th anniversary of *Humanae vitae*, he remarked that its doctrine "belongs to the permanent patrimony of the Church's moral doctrine."

"The doctrine expounded in the encyclical *Humanae vitae* thus constitutes the necessary defence of the dignity and truth of conjugal love."



"I cannot pass over in silence the fact that many today do not aid married couples in this grave responsibility of theirs, but rather place significant obstacles in their place ... Married couples can be seriously impeded by a certain hedonistic mentality widespread today, by the mass media, by ideologies and practices contrary to the gospel. This can also come about, with truly grave and destructive consequences, when the doctrine taught by the Encyclical is called into open question..."

"Pope Paul VI expressed the certainty that the document constituted a contribution ... to the establishment of a truly human civilization. Twenty years after its publication, the foundation of that conviction is truly borne out in many ways; in ways which can be verified not only by believers, but by every man or woman who is thoughtful about the lot of mankind, since anyone can view the consequences of man's disobedience to God's holy law."

Freedom of conscience

13. December 1990

In the summer of 1988 the Pope told theologians

"You can't say that a member of the faithful has carried out a diligent investigation of the truth if he doesn't take into account what the magisterium teaches ..."

In a World Day of Peace message for January 1, 1991, released in December 1990, he reiterated the complexities of conscience.

"Yes, the conscience is supreme - but not as a source of truth. And yes, a person has to follow his conscience, but a person does not manufacture truth. A person must learn from revelation and other sources." (B.C. Catholic, January 20, 1991)

Contraception is an intrinsic evil

14. August 1993

In the encyclical *The Splendor of Truth* (Aug. 6, 1993) the Pope reaffirms the intrinsic evil of contraception as taught by Pope Paul VI:

"With regard to intrinsically evil acts, and in reference to contraceptive practices whereby the conjugal act is intentionally rendered infertile, Pope Paul VI teaches:

'Though it is true that sometimes it is lawful to tolerate a lesser moral evil in order to avoid a greater evil or in order to promote a greater good, it is never lawful, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil that good may come of it (cf. Rom.3:8) - in other words, to intend directly something which of its very nature contradicts the moral order, and which must therefore be judged unworthy of man, even though the intention is to protect or promote the welfare of an individual, of a family or of society in general.'" (n.80).

The two dimensions of marriage

15. February 1994

In his Letter to Families, signed on Feb. 2, 1994, the Holy Father says:

"In particular, responsible fatherhood and motherhood directly concern the moment in which a man and a woman, uniting 'in one flesh', can become parents. This is a moment of special value to both of them for their interpersonal relationship and for their service to life: they can become parents - father and mother - by communicating life to a new human being. The two dimensions of conjugal union, the unitive and the procreative, cannot be artificially separated without damaging the deepest truth of the conjugal act itself.

"This is the constant teaching of the Church, and the 'signs of the times' which we see today are providing new reasons for forcefully reaffirming that teaching. Saint Paul, himself so attentive to the pastoral demands of his day, clearly and firmly indicated the need to be 'urgent in season and out of season' (cf. 2 Tim. 4:2), and not to be daunted by the fact that 'sound teaching is no longer endured' (cf. 2 Tim.4:3). His words are well known to those who with deep insight into the events of the present time, expect that the Church will not only not abandon 'sound doctrine' but will proclaim it with renewed vigour, seeking in today's 'signs of the times' the incentive and insights which can lead to a deeper understanding of her teaching." (n.12).

Harmful demographic policies

16. November 1996

The Holy Father wrote a Message to Bishop Elio Sgreccia on the occasion of an international congress on the theme "At the Sources of Life," sponsored by the Centre for Studies and Research on the Natural Regulation of Fertility of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart.

Text

2. The crisis of values and ideals, which has taken hold of contemporary society, challenges believers to undertake widespread and persevering formational activity: this is the frontier advanced by the new evangelization, to which they must be committed on the threshold of the third Christian millennium.

The family, the heart of human society and the nucleus of the ecclesial community itself, is one of the subjects that demands the greatest attention from the Church and from those responsible for the destinies of peoples. Unbridled hedonism and disregard for human life, which is weak and unproductive at its mysterious and delicate beginnings, require the proclamation of the "Gospel of life" to be supported by a constant commitment to teaching spouses to be aware of their own vocation as servants of life, in responsible collaboration with the Creator's provident wisdom.

This convention marks an important stage in the silent and painstaking work which the centre has been doing for more than 20 years, in the delicate area of responsible procreation by the promotion of natural methods. The courageous effort to promote these methods in obedience to the teaching of *Humanae vitae*, *Familiaris consortio* and *Evangelium vitae*, after a difficult start surrounded by the misunderstanding of public opinion, today enjoys growing scientific recognition and is confirmed in the serenity and peace of married couples who are committed to living periodic continence and understand its value and spirit.

These results can instil new courage in the face of the worrying consequences of a false sexual freedom for which contraception provides the incentive and means, increasing the dulling of consciences and the eclipse of values.

The harmful campaigns of certain demographic policies, which attempt to pass off contraception as licit and right, and which spread and impose on individuals and peoples an instrumental and utilitarian view of life, must be answered with every initiative that can support scientifically and with correct information the validity of natural methods, in accordance with the Church's constant teaching.